

# IDOH Improvement Program

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The Indiana Department of Highways (IDOH) is required by statute to plan, construct, and maintain highways that will provide a safe and efficient system for the transport of people and goods. Following is a brief summary of the highway program for this coming construction season and also an estimate of what the program will be for FY86. It is an estimate because at this time the IDOH budget has not been established for the FY86, therefore, the program level will have to be adjusted to fit when this information is available. It is unfortunate that availability of funds rather than needs establishes the program. If that were not the case, there would not be much need for planning, however, planning has been a big effort over the past few years.

The constantly declining funds available for highway needs in recent years have forced us to concentrate on the preservation of the existing highways system. The 1982 Surface Transportation Assistance Act greatly increased the federal highway funds available to Indiana, however, state funds have not increased proportionately and congress has played games with highway funds for the past two years. This has greatly complicated establishing a highway program with some element of continuity.

Congress has just approved the Interstate cost estimate which permits the Federal Highway Administration to release the impounded funds. Indiana will be getting about \$130 million from this release. This will be split about \$104 million to the state and \$26 million to the local units of government.

The released funds available to the department will be used to fund the May and June lettings. Had these funds been withheld longer we would have had very, very small lettings in April, May and June. A portion of these funds in the Interstate construction and the Interstate substitution categories will not be used until later in the year as projects on I-164 are readied for letting, and the I-70 added lanes project in Indianapolis is placed under contract. We have applied for discretionary funds to supplement the Interstate substitution funds available for the I-70 project. The size of the project put to contract will depend on availability of these funds.

Our FY85 program has moved through the project development phase to construction in a rather orderly manner this year except for a few high visibility projects which have required extra effort on everyone's

part. The ones which immediately come to mind are the I-69 interchanges at Fort Wayne to accommodate the GM plant construction. There were also many emergency projects to correct slides and erosion problems, also the replacement and repair of bridges damaged by overweight or oversize vehicles.

So far this year we have let contracts for the replacement of 55 bridges. We anticipate 42 additional bridges will be let to contract this spring and summer.

We have placed 96 bridge rehabilitation projects under contract so far this year and we have another 100 which will be let by the end of the summer.

We have placed 477 mi-etc of resurface work under contract this year and have another 324 mi ready to go. This is non-interstate F.A. 3R and state funded resurface.

We have let 32.2 mi of Interstate 4R work and have another 40.1 mi ready to go.

In the major road improvement category we have let contracts for 14 projects which total 4.9 mi and we have 20 projects totalling another 7.0 mi which will be placed under contracts soon.

We have placed 86 minor highway improvements under contract so far this year and have another 125 projects ready to go to letting.

For FY86, our budget is yet to be established. The department has submitted budget requests to the legislature at two levels. The lower level would continue our operations and construction at about the same level as that for FY85. This will require about \$207 million for the next biennium beyond the existing dedicated funds. The higher level of funding proposed is that which the transportation coordinating board determined to be the minimum they could recommend in good conscience. This will require about \$438 million for the next biennium beyond the present level of dedicated highway funds. Even this is still far short of the funding required to prevent continued increase in highway needs.

Regardless of the final budget figure we will have to maintain our existing priorities. These are preservation of existing highways, improvements to existing highways and last, construction of new facilities.

Projects currently identified for FY86 consist of the following:

Bridge replacement	95
Bridge rehabilitation	287
Non-Interstate resurface (3R)	301 mi
Non-Interstate resurface (state)	409 mi
Interstate 4R	129 mi
Major road projects	65 or 49 mi
Minor highway improvement projects	269

These numbers will be adjusted when our final budget is available and some adjustment may be necessary through the year to provide for

delays in project development or unanticipated developments in the preservation category of work.

There are increasing needs for highway development to complement economic growth throughout the state as the Department of Commerce works with industry to attract new facilities to Indiana or to expand existing operations. Several such projects have been identified and the development is underway with construction to follow just as quickly as possible.

Segments of major highway improvements will be placed under contract in FY86. These include the South Bend Bypass, the Fort Wayne Bypass, State Road 49 Bypass at Valparaiso, State Road 332 added lanes at Muncie, I-70 added lanes at Indianapolis, I-164 at Evansville and State Road 66 at Evansville. These are but a few of the areas drawing on our highway dollars.

A new drain on the highway construction dollar is the increasing unwillingness of the public to be inconvenienced by highway construction. This is forcing the IDOH to reduce construction time for projects, build temporary runarounds rather than establish detours and build projects under traffic. All these options increase the contractor's cost which is reflected in the increased cost of projects. This reduces the number of projects which can be accomplished with funds available.

There is the spector on the horizon of Congress starting over again to establish an Interstate cost estimate before these funds can be distributed October 1. This in addition to their development of a new highway bill for 1986 to set funding levels and priorities for the future. Let's hope their record is better than the most recent effort.